

As a licensed Amateur Radio Operator I feel obliged to add my comments to the fray.

My feelings, in short, are to have the CW requirements dropped in the interests of the hobby. I have personally studied the CW requirement when I was much younger and never mastered it. For much of my life was excluded from a hobby I had a passion for. Once the requirement was dropped from the "entry" level requirements, I studied the required material, passed the exam and got my call sign KC2KIS. My wife has also passed the requirements and we both enjoy the hobby. We would both like to further out knowledge of the hobby but the CW requirement holds us back. Personally I would like to see it dropped but I don't expect a "free ride" to the next level. My feelings are the current Technician group must be required to pass an exam to stretch the mind and with that achieve more privileges. This is the spirit of what the hobby is all about.

I feel the CW portions of the band need to be used just for that or, perhaps, shared with other digital modes but not done away with. As CW is a valid historic mode that can be used where all others fail, its value must not be ignored.

The code speed issue is something that I find interesting, as some transmitting requires very slow code under harsh conditions while under ideal conditions some operators achieve high speeds. The 5 WPM sounds like a good compromise, as during disasters we will never know what the conditions will be and thus need to have as many people qualified to assist as possible. Should CW be required for the highest levels of the hobby? That answer I will leave that to more educated people to decide.